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ABSTRACT

A series of focus group interviews with teachers and principals from six schools in several mid-Atlantic states examined common frustrations over staff development and school restructuring. Results of the interviews showed that the staff development needs of schools undergoing restructuring often do not match programs offered by the state or school district. Teachers spoke of the limited time available to learn about and implement new ideas and strategies. Teachers also dwelled on student demographics and classroom management issues rather than instructional strategies. Similarly, discussion did not move easily beyond alterations in rules, roles, and relationships to focus on results. Observing other teachers in schools involved in similar restructuring efforts was cited as helpful in staff development, but was not done often enough. It was also found that working together and collegiality were important to teachers. Many restructuring efforts require teachers to be less isolated and work together. Teachers also cited the need to set aside time for staff development and receive full compensation for it. Conflicts with state and district requirements also were mentioned as a barrier to school-level restructuring. (Contains 14 references.) (JPT)

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Barriers to School Restructuring:

The Process and Content of Staff Development

submitted by

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INTRODUCTION

Focus groups are conducted each year within the Mid-Atlantic region to gather needs assessment information on school restructuring to assist Research for Better Schools (RBS) in its planning process. Focus groups enable RBS to learn about issues that school district personnel are grappling with as they seek to restructure their schools. As a result, RBS staff are better able to amass lessons learned and shape the laboratory's programs and services to meet the region's needs.

This document reports on the latest round of focus groups held in the spring of 1993. The central organizing theme for FY 93 focus groups grew out of the frustration expressed by teachers as they talked during the FY 92 focus groups about their efforts to interact with their students and fellow teachers in alternative ways (Sidler, 1993). To further explore this issue, FY 93 focus groups asked teachers and principals to talk in-depth about the staff development needs generated by restructuring efforts, and to identify barriers to staff development within their individual schools.

The report is organized in three major sections. The first describes the methodology used to select focus group participants, conduct the focus groups, and analyze the discussions. The second section analyzes the results of the focus group discussions and gives a voice to the teachers and principals who are clear about their needs and the barriers they see to successful staff development. The final section draws conclusions about the value of staff development as it is currently configured as a vehicle for change and the implications of this for RBS as it plans its future work.

METHODOLOGY

To conduct the FY 93 focus groups, Needs Assessment/Evaluation staff solicited their colleagues in Applied Research, State Assistance, Rural Education, and Urban Education for nominations of schools within the Mid-Atlantic region with which they had direct contact and/or schools which they believed to be grappling with restructuring issues. Several schools and/or school districts were nominated.

Selection of Participants

Schools were approached with an eye to geographic and urban/rural representation within the region. RBS also felt it important to include a range of schools from elementary through high school. To this end, a total of six schools were contacted and all agreed to participate. This group of schools included three elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school.

- Taylor Elementary School, a Chapter 1 schoolwide project in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which has selected and implemented an instructional model (an integrated science model which focuses on the processes of communication, observation, inference, and numeracy), and established a support system through (a) the creation of new groups and staff roles, and (b) a data-based planning/problem solving process to develop/update school improvement plans in order to meet its goals of improved student attendance, achievement, and parental involvement (McCann, 1990).

- Cooper's Poynt, a Professional Development Family School of Excellence (PD/FSE) in Camden, New Jersey, designed to "create a lifelong learning community in collaboration with Rowan College to facilitate higher levels of learning by educating and empowering all children. This means engaging prospective teachers in activities which will help to prepare them for the urban teaching experience; providing experienced teachers with opportunities for renewal and inquiry into innovative and effective instructional practices based on current research in the field of education; and involving parents and the community in the

educational process as learning partners" (Cooper's Poynt PD/FSE program material, 1993, p.3).

- Thomson Estates Elementary School in Elkton, Maryland, an early childhood transition program (pre-K through second grade in the school building with ties to the local Head Start program), characterized by educational theory, philosophy, and instruction based on developmentally appropriate practice.

- Milford Middle School in Milford, Delaware, a middle school which is planning to implement seventh and eighth grade teaching teams and advisor/advisee relationships between teacher and student in the fall of 1993. The decision to return to the middle school concept was made to reconnect students and parents to teachers. These connections had been weakened by the school's adoption of a high school model as part of their efforts to obtain higher academic scores.

- Harold A. Wilson Middle School, a Professional Development School (PDS) in Newark, New Jersey, provides teachers of middle school students throughout Newark with an opportunity "to come together to expand and refine their knowledge base while creating an exemplary school for students" (School Administrators/Teachers Handbook, 1992-1993, p.9). "Visiting teachers" are released from their home schools for five weeks to work with "resident teachers" at PDS, observing exemplary classroom programs; attending lectures and demonstrations; participating in discussions, seminars and clinics; learning and practicing new teaching strategies; while at the same time getting, giving, and responding to feedback on teaching.

- J.P. McCaskey High School, a Coalition of Essential Schools/RE: Learning site in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, is based on Theodore Sizer's nine common principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) which formed a partnership with the Education Commission of the States (ECS) "to help educators rethink pedagogies, curricula, structures, and environments of education...to help all students learn and use their

minds well" (RBS, 1992, p.1). An integrated curriculum taught by teams of teachers was seen as the vehicle for change.

In addition to the staff of these six schools, a seventh focus group was assembled of middle school and high school principals and staff development specialists from the Pittsburgh School District. Since only one of the other groups (Milford Middle School) had included a principal, this group provided an additional perspective. The principals from Pittsburgh were able to speak about the changes they were attempting to implement in their buildings, such as teacher teaming. All other focus groups were made up of teachers who were members of teams at various stages of restructuring within their schools. Groups ranged in size from 4 to 12 with a median of 7.

Conduct of Focus Group Sessions

With the exception of the group from Pittsburgh, which met in a staff development facility operated by the school district, focus groups were conducted in classrooms at the participating schools. All sessions began with introductions and explanations concerning the purpose of the groups. Each session was taped, with all participants promised confidentiality of individual response.

The sessions ranged in length from 60-90 minutes and were moderated by a member of RBS' Needs Assessment/Evaluation unit who provided stimulation for discussion but otherwise remained outside the discussion of issues themselves. As noted above, the major stimuli came from two central questions: "What are the major staff development needs facing teachers as you attempt to restructure your schools?" and "What are the barriers to staff development?"

Analysis of Focus Group Discussions

To facilitate the analysis, transcripts were made of all seven focus group sessions. The transcripts ranged in length from 17-28 pages with a median of 24 pages. Each transcript was read several times to identify and code the major themes and reactions that emerged, and to highlight appropriate quotations for inclusion in the report. Quotations were edited to make the text more readable.

RESULTS

This section of the report summarizes the discussions of the seven focus groups. The major theme to emerge was that there is a mismatch between the staff development needs of individual schools and the content and process of the programs that are offered, often dictated by state and/or district policies, as well as the level and utilization of available resources at individual schools. While some of the needs expressed are specific to individual schools, others speak more to general criticisms about the approach to staff development, broadly defined as any activity designed to improve the effectiveness of teachers.

Evidence of the need for a better match between the ideal and actual content and process of staff development programs is presented below. First, teachers talked at length about the process of staff development, particularly the limitations of time available for learning about and implementing new ideas and strategies. Second, teachers tended to dwell on student demographics and classroom management-type issues at the expense of any lengthy discussion around instructional strategies designed to ensure success for all students. Teachers appeared to have difficulty moving beyond alterations in "rules, roles, and relationships" in order to focus on "results" (Corbett, 1990).

"You Can't Always Get What You Want"

In a recent study of systemic restructuring, researchers found consistent student success in schools characterized by "teachers and administrators who design and select professional development opportunities that are directly related to the changes they are making" (Olson, 1993). Focus group participants were able to talk generally about what an ideal staff development process would look like ("this is where we are; help us from here"); the reality of what they got, however, was often very different from what they needed ("wait a second, you've jumped two steps ahead of us; we still need to know about this and you're already telling us about down the road"). These quotations illustrate the mismatch often experienced in the process and content of staff development programs. Particular problems associated with the process are presented below, followed by a discussion of content issues.

Learning From Each Other

Several of the groups talked about the value of observing other teachers engaged in similar restructuring efforts and would like increased opportunities to do so. The time and resources needed to facilitate this kind of cross-school visits (in the form of release time and substitutes) were often lacking, thereby prohibiting this type of staff development activity. Where such resources did exist, however, they contributed to valuable staff development experiences for teachers who needed to see a model in action and learned important lessons from such exposure.

> We visited [schools] and they gave us their whole program and told us what some of the pitfalls were.
>
> We spent a day in an elementary school in New York that's trying some programs that we've been thinking about, that was also a Coalition school...We started this last year and we're not quite sure what it's supposed to look like and where we're supposed to be going with it, so let's see a school that's been involved in it for years and see what they are doing.
>
> Some of us had to go to Michigan to see how Michigan State University is incorporated with the medical school and East Lansing schools.

Lost opportunities exist, however, when teachers who have made such visits are unable to reflect upon and share common experiences:

> They sent us on five different days, I think, two people, five different times, and the ten of us have never sat down -- because we didn't all go to the same schools -- to share what we saw and, you know, some things we liked and some things we didn't like...It would be nice if the ten of us could talk.

The ability to learn by observing others is not limited to teachers in other schools. Cross-grade visits within the same building or in schools within their own districts also provided important learning experiences for teachers. One kindergarten teacher talked about the need to observe the classrooms awaiting her students in the next grades:

> I think we could learn a lot just within our school, the expertise of the first and second grade. I wish we had more

> opportunity, at our level, to go up and see what happens once they leave us...But since scheduling is so hard, I can understand that, time, time, time, right -- it's difficult.

Teachers who do not have the opportunity to visit other schools or grades can still benefit from the insights and knowledge gained by those who do make such visits, as well as course and workshop content, if there is time set aside afterwards for teachers to share their impressions and insights. Often this is not done, however, resulting in teacher frustration and lost opportunities for the trickling down of lessons learned.

Written materials that provide a model for teachers to follow were discussed as an option pursued where the preferred site visits were impossible due to limited resources. As one principal noted:

> They were also provided with the sample interdisciplinary unit that was recommended by the National Middle Schools Association. I called them and they sent me a book called Middle School Curriculum in Action. In that book, there are two chapters that relate specifically to thematic instruction, interdisciplinary units, and they all received a copy of that. It had a model in there and that worked, that seemed to work fairly well.
>
> I think we really would have been in a panic if we didn't have some sort of a skeleton, or some sort of outline, or something to give us some direction, because we were really scared at first...Had we not had that model....

Schools were still faced with the problem of finding time for teachers to reflect upon such materials, however, as well as time for them to meet in order to plan and design lessons and/or units once these materials had been digested. A teacher from one of the groups dreamed of an ideal solution. While acknowledging that it was unrealistic (a dream), she talked about how the school district should hire twice the number of teachers that they currently employ and have each work for half a day:

> ...really we'd work all day, but each would have a half day with the kids and the other half day would be spent planning these fabulous lessons...spend half the day with the children and half of our day with each other, planning and sharing.

This "American Dream" is, in fact, a reality in many other countries. Darling-Hammond (1993, p.757) contrasts the experience of American teachers (similar to those from the focus group participants described above) with those in other countries and finds lessons to be learned. In contrast to "real teaching" in American schools, i.e., teaching five or six large groups of students one after another:

> ...teachers in most countries work with large groups of students only 15 to 20 hours per week and spend the other 20 to 30 hours per week working individually with students and parents, planning and consulting with other teachers, and developing curriculum and assessments. The conception of teaching in these countries assumes that collegial work is the basis for instructional decisions and actions rather than that individual assembly line workers process "products" passing by on a conveyor belt.

The language arts teachers at one professional development school are fortunate in that they enjoy a variation of this ideal international experience when students are scheduled into content area classes in the afternoons, leaving the language arts teachers with time to meet and plan with their colleagues. Recent research findings emphasize the importance of collegiality in effecting change. McLaughlin and Talbert have found that "teachers who had made the most successful changes in their practice and had more positive views about their students' capabilities turned out to have one thing in common: belonging to an active professional community that encouraged and enabled them to transform their teaching" (Bradley, 1993, p.7).

Team Building/Bonding

Even more important for teams of teachers facing alterations in "rules, roles, relationships, and results" is time to build trust by working together and sharing experiences. Echoing the findings from the last focus group report (Sidler, 1993), teachers uniformly talked about the need to break down the barriers imposed by traditional teaching practices which encourage independence among teachers, particularly at the high school level. Teachers have been used to working alone and in relative control over the content and pace of their instruction. However, many restructuring efforts require the classroom doors to be opened and teachers to work together on thematic or interdisciplinary units.

> Before you can deal with any of these other things like curriculum...you have to be a team...team building, I don't know where it falls on the scale of priorities, but I think that it's at the top.
>
> But how can you plan a curriculum as a team if you are not a team?

One principal discussed his efforts to bring parents into the school to take over lunch duty so teachers could be freed up from that non-instructional drain on their time to engage in valuable common planning time.

> I tell people, if they can get me two parents to cover for them, then they will be released from lunch duty and we can do some professional things.

Thus, common planning time is seen as an ongoing staff development activity that is critical both for the writing of thematic or interdisciplinary units and for building trust and cooperation among teachers unaccustomed to such collaboration and often reluctant to share resources. Unfortunately, common planning time often remains an ideal, with teachers instead talking about the reality of the school schedule.

> That was one of the prime weaknesses...never were we given the chance to meet with the other two teams to share experiences or insights, or to talk about common problems. There was never time built in.

Experience has taught at least two groups that team building or bonding needs to be ongoing; it is not enough to provide time only at the beginning of program implementation for the original members of the team. As new staff join the original planning teams, there must be time in the schedule to provide support for teachers who are insecure with the changes they are attempting to implement.

> I think in the first year we had a lot more training in the philosophy and the background of why we were doing what we were doing, and I don't think any of the second year people got any of that. I know they cut that. The other thing is we went to Central Park, to other schools who are doing these things, and [the others] didn't.

This was also a theme that emerged during the FY 92 focus groups, i.e., the second year team being placed at a disadvantage in the absence of the support given to their colleagues the previous year. Without such support, teachers are faced with the reality of "fumbling in the dark" and tend to resist the changes required of them.

Resistance to change is found among new team members, or "trail blazers" (Cole & Schlechty, cited in Little, 1993, p.141), and among school staff excluded from the initial implementation of restructuring efforts but expected to join at a later date. This resistance, and the resentment that often builds around perceived privileges enjoyed by a select (elite) number of teachers, must be diffused through regular information sessions, which also requires time.

> I think staff development is needed for the (non-program) teachers to inform them and take the mystery out of it. So many of those teachers actually use what we use. We are not doing all that much. I mean we are doing some things differently, they just need to be informed. Ignorance kind of makes them real angry and we have to take away some of that anger.
>
> We felt that if we focused on the ninth graders and gave those teachers common planning time, most of the resources, most of the support, it would have an impact on the whole school but we are still having difficulty with the whole school buying into it as a whole group...all they saw was that someone was teaching three periods and I'm teaching five.
>
> You get a lot of bad feeling and bad perception from teachers who might have an extra period or duty period as opposed to someone who has planning time. So, trying to get the whole school to buy into the concept when the concept is just going to affect part of the school is very difficult.

The ability to bond is seen as particularly critical for teachers who are "drafted" into a program. Two schools attempted to eliminate this problem by requiring all teachers to re-apply for positions at the schools, thus giving teachers who were resistant to the proposed changes the opportunity to go elsewhere. A principal at a third school had polled his teachers before setting up teams in order to learn if there were teachers that would pose serious problems to the successful functioning of the team structure.

Scheduling and Compensation

Without time set aside during the school day, teachers are expected to be available on their own time -- after school, weekends, or during the summer, a less than ideal situation. While many teachers committed to change expressed a willingness to do this (and most are, in fact, forced to do just this), there is frequently a tension between conflicting obligations such as graduate courses or child care.

> The big issue is there's plenty of staff development out there, and we're doing plenty of it here, but, you know, it's the time that it's done. Usually it's after school and mommies have to get home to the kids and other things. People are taking courses and they have to leave right away, and it's really the time, I think, that's the great barrier here.

And often when time is set aside after school for staff development, the reality of the situation is that much of this time is wasted on unrelated topics or teachers arriving late.

> There's always that administrative work that has to get done; that takes the first 20 minutes, so you start 10-15 minutes late...so your staff development ends up being 20 minutes long and even if it was something we could all benefit from, we're not getting enough real time out of it.

Teachers also expressed resentment at having to do staff development on their own time.

> If you look at corporate staff development, [it] is always done on corporate time, or in retreat-like types of things. Staff development in education is always jammed into half days now, when teachers are trying to get their grade reports in and everything else.

Teachers at one school were particularly outraged at the level of compensation offered for staff development scheduled during the summer months.

> They expect teachers to come in during their summer vacations for $13 an hour. No, not when you are being paid $25 and $30 an hour during the school year. If money was available to pay us commensurate with what our salary is, then you're going to get more people willing to come in for the pay.

The value of scheduling staff development activities sporadically throughout the year was questioned by participants in several groups.

> One day here and one day there, and often times they are spread, there's no focus, so if you can get concentrated periods of time during the normal work day, that would be ideal.

> They are all spread out over the year so there is no continuity there either. It's also, when do they [teachers] need a vacation, and that's where they put them.

As the above quotations suggest, teachers also were critical of the lack of follow-up to staff development activities. School districts' proclivity towards the traditional "one-shot" training model has limited value since the opportunity for reflection and follow-up is lost. This is supported by recent research findings that report favorably on staff development activities that "offer substantive depth and focus, adequate time to grapple with ideas and materials, the sense of doing real work rather than being 'talked at,' and an opportunity to consult with colleagues and experts" (Little, 1993, p.137). The picture presented by focus group participants, however, bore little resemblance to this ideal type:

> We tend to have one hit and move on.

> I argued that [against "one shot things"] before the staff development committee. I said, my God, we have been working for two years on our outcome-based education and you're going to give people a one day program on one aspect of that and then next year they'll get another. It's absurd. [The response was] well, we have to start somewhere.

> What I always wanted to do for changing the staff development is if we attend a conference or we attend a workshop or something, then we are given a day or two or three to come up with plans, because we're never given that time afterwards to use it. It takes time to think about what you've learned and to come up with plans...Give us a day or two off sometime to come up with plans; we try them in the class and then we report back about what we've learned and how to use it.

The need for follow-up to staff development was heard over and over again:

> They love cooperative learning and then they go back to their schools and they can't use it because their principal wants the school quiet.

> What we are finding is that the teachers are very gung-ho when they leave...but the reality of the school, lots of things set in when they get back there and we need to look at that...they [teachers] were disillusioned because the principal said he was going to give the same preps to the two of them, and he didn't so now they can't meet...That's a factor we really can't control.

In an attempt to eliminate this problem, principals have been included in the training.

> They are supposed to come in three or four times during the five week period when their teachers are here and we talk about what's going on here, what they might have to do to facilitate the whole process in terms of giving them common preps...We need to work on those outside factors because the teachers go back to a reality that's not good.

In spite of including principals in the staff development, the reality of the home school often results in a loss of enthusiasm on the part of returning teachers and an inability to apply what they have learned. The follow-up component to any staff development program, therefore, is seen as crucial. Absence of common preparation/planning time can interfere with the follow-up process, however, as evidenced by teachers who were trained together and then were not able to meet as a team for follow-up coaching and support.

> When they go back [to their home schools], they should have the same prep so that they can sit together with what we call a clinician, the outsider from here [PDS], that will go there as a coach and they'll continue to practice with their own students and get feedback from each other...and from the clinician.

While the above quotation represents a clearly individualized need for schools participating in this districtwide PDS effort, several of the groups described similar frustrations as they attempted to institute ideal staff development activities (i.e., follow-up activities) that were meaningful to them.

State/District Policies

Newmann & Clune (1992) discuss how policies in curriculum, assessment, teacher preparation, and staff development hinder a school's efforts to improve curriculum and instruction. Several groups identified state or district policies or requirements as barriers to meeting their individual school needs for staff development. Examples of such policies were as follows:

> Pennsylvania has very strict requirements in terms of what you can and cannot do on Act 80 days...They are strictly controlled by the state and a lot of what we need to do we can't do because of the guidelines. Also the district has this tradition that they're going to have one district day, one departmental day, and one individual day, and that really doesn't suit our needs as well.

> The first year we received some grant money; we had two weeks in the summer to train our first team of teachers and then last year I had two new teams and we had some grant money, but the board said we couldn't use the money to pay teachers for in-service so that killed the training...we tried to pull them out of the building three times this year and took them to the community for some one-day in-service sessions. It was a whole lot better having two weeks in the summer, before they started to work together as a team, so they could bond a little. Once the board killed that, it did hurt us quite a bit.

Restructuring at the school level alone cannot solve this problem (Newmann and Clune, 1992). Absent systemic reform, individual schools will continue to face such barriers, or look for "creative" ways to circumvent them!

Whether teachers were discussing team building or bonding, curriculum writing, cross-grade or cross-school visits, or merely sharing lessons learned from such experiences, the discrepancy between the time and resources available to them and those needed to implement the changes required for schools to restructure appeared significant to them. The next section describes some of the more substantive areas that teachers would like to see addressed, if time were not such a barrier to staff development and individual schools were able to design their own staff development programs.

Content: Know Your Audience

Referring to it as the "cornerstone of restructuring," Lieberman & Miller (1990) identified "the rethinking of curricular and instructional efforts" as one of five building blocks that underlie the current school reform movement designed to "promote quality and equality for all students." Such "rethinking" was not uppermost on group participants' minds, however. With one major exception (team teaching or interdisciplinary teaching, noted above), focus group participants articulated little concern about staff development devoted to new instructional strategies, indicating that restructuring spoke less to them about how (and what) to teach in the classroom and more about building relationships with their colleagues and their students. (This had also been found to be the case with the Greensburg-Salem teachers who participated in the FY 92 focus groups.)

Instructional Methods

When pushed to think about their staff development needs related to areas of the instructional process, assessment emerged as the one producing the most amount of frustration. As teachers from one school which has met with considerable success in other areas of its restructuring effort noted:

> Assessment is definitely...the biggest one [staff development need]. I think we all kind of feel pretty comfortable with how we're teaching but then reporting and assessing is still a sore spot, or a rough spot, I guess I should say.

Teachers from another school talked about needing to be in-serviced on cooperative learning. Participants were able to speak first hand about the benefits to "visiting teachers" brought in to observe the modelling of cooperative teaching by "resident teachers" at one of the professional development schools.

> I can't really get upset when they [students] can't work together in a group, because sometimes there are days we [teachers] have trouble working together in groups.

The limited discussion of staff development needs related to instructional strategies was disappointing. Instead, focus group participants talked at

length about the need for a better understanding of issues related to their student population: child development, social problems, culture, and special education were the topics that were uppermost in their minds.

Child Development

Several of the groups talked about the need for a deeper understanding of their student populations. In some schools, this was a need which had developed as a result of expanding the school population to include additional (i.e., older) grades. For example, one school has taken the sixth, seventh and eighth grades from local schools to form a middle school:

> So we also had to introduce the students to the middle school concept, which we are learning ourselves. None of us came from middle school so this is also part of the staff development training, the understanding of the pre-adolescent and the middle school concept.

Another school was expanding from an elementary school to a combination elementary/middle school by keeping first its graduating fifth graders, then its graduating sixth graders, and finally, this year, its graduating seventh graders. The end result will be students ranging in age from four to 15 years. Teachers are beginning to recognize the challenges that such changes bring.

> Since we are switching from the elementary to a combination elementary/middle, it would probably be beneficial to have some kind of inservicing, or whatever you want to call it...It's all different for all ages and I think a lot of people are not used to dealing with that age bracket.

Whether it be a need to engage students in interesting, relevant work, or to "look at how the middle school, transition child learns," teachers involved in restructuring efforts -- particularly those directed at "new populations" -- feel a need to better understand the different stages of child/adolescent development.

Social Problems

While the current restructuring movement exhorts us to "think first about students" (Corbett & Blum, 1993), it also expects teachers in urban schools to "look beyond the backdrop of societal and economic conditions...and focus on what we know and can do to improve instruction. They must think strategically about learners -- about their cultural differences and their differing needs, about the community context, and about ways to engage students with important substantive ideas" (Carter, 1992, p.2). The reality of many urban school populations, however, appears to be leaving teachers immobilized by the enormous needs of the students they encounter in their classroom; as a result, they are often unable to move beyond the students' backgrounds and focus on the instructional strategies necessary to address the diverse needs of their students. Teachers from five of the seven groups talked at length about the many social problems confronting their students and their own lack of training or preparation in dealing with the consequences that inevitably impact on the classroom.

> I see the problems as far as behavior because of the background, the problems that arise from the home definitely come into the classroom. Like every big city, we are experiencing the same problems...We are the foot soldiers, we're the ones that see it; other people read about it but we experience it every day. So behavior, income, care, neglect, abuse, lack of attention, readiness of the children before school, social skills, interacting with others, self esteem, the whole gamut. Just run down the list and check it off.

> A minority of the staff don't realize how the nature of society has changed and what we're having to deal with as educators...I saw a comment in the newspaper the other day...and one of the comments was we've got to decide if we want to be educators or social service workers. Unfortunately, that's not a decision we're making. That's a decision that's being made for us by the population that walks through the door each and every day and, you know, I agree that education is a primary concern, but the responsibilities that are being given to us, like with the school health centers and all these other things that are coming down the road that are outside of what we would look at as being core education, basically are dictated through legislation.

In other schools, frustration was expressed over a perceived growth in student hostility or hatred observed within the school. The result is problems with discipline that interfere with the restructuring efforts, e.g., when the construction of cooperative learning groups have to be made with an eye towards which students are currently "at war" with others.

> There is something different with the kids this year that I have not sensed since 1969, and I've tried everything I know in the book; there are certain kids that nothing is getting through to. There is so much hatred in parts of the community that it seems that some kids. I need in-servicing on how to deal with student hate.
>
> Discipline. They [teachers] have a lot of concerns about discipline and strategies to be used with the students. I'm hearing that more and more.
>
> Things are not the way they were ten years ago, and I submit that they are not the way they were three years ago. Kids are changing so quickly and dramatically that I think that's a big frustration for teachers.

Clearly, many teachers are feeling overburdened with the multitude of problems they face each day, problems that appear to be getting in the way of what they see as the primary function of a restructured school.

> Don't expect the same people to be picking up the burden for all of society's problems. If you need social workers in the school, fund them, bring them in.

In the absence of in-house experts trained to deal with the many social problems confronting students and interfering with the work of education, staff development in this area might go a long way toward easing the strain.

Culture

There was also a recognition among teachers that they are out of touch with the culture of their students and that the curriculum all too frequently ignores that culture and thereby fails to offer students a meaningful educational experience.

> We've done next to nothing when it comes to curriculum for our African American majority population...As a general rule, there has been so very little done that African American

> students don't see their culture expressed in the instruction, values, and all those kinds of connections that need to be made for the success of that particular group and all students...The teachers want to know this. They want to be in-serviced around it and want to have the appropriate curriculum and the texts. We're just slow in moving in that direction.
>
> Or in-services that address just the African American culture and life style. I know a lot of teachers in the classrooms who have maybe 80 percent African Americans sitting in their classes who know very little about the culture, the African American culture.

Groups talked about different strategies, such as home visits and faculty walks as alternatives to consider as part of an overall staff development program to address this void.

> You really need to get out into the community and walk the streets and see what the priorities are out there and then you would understand why the children come in the way they do.

The reality of the situation, however, is that teachers are often uncomfortable with such personal involvement, and so claim that parents do not want it or that teachers already feel over-burdened without taking on additional responsibilities.

Special Education

The movement towards mainstreaming or inclusion of special education students into the regular classroom has raised more questions than it has answered. Special education teachers from three groups talked about this as an important area that tends to be neglected in terms of the staff development offered by local school districts.

> I have a lot of questions about inclusion programs that I would like more specific information on, like rather than outcomes, how does it work? Who works with it? [I need] practical applications, things that I could use and bring back here and apply, like how many teachers are involved? What kind of students will this work with? What kind of ratios are in the classroom?

Special education teachers did not see staff development around inclusion limited to them; they also saw a need for the in-servicing of the regular classroom teachers who will be receiving those students.

> Once we do this [inclusion] we will need inservices for regular education teachers as well as special education. There's going to be issues that people will be concerned about that hopefully will be resolved before we take this on.
>
> I think there's a need for staff development for all teachers regarding special education because the movement now is to get the children out of the special education placement and put them into the mainstream...and I think regular teachers are going to need that training in order to deal with the special education students.

One special education teacher, however, questioned the extent to which staff development was the solution to a much larger problem. Instead:

> It would be nice if we just had more people on hand to deal with the special problems that my kids present...it would be nice if we just had more of a support staff. I mean, it would cost money, but the more people on hand to deal with the special problems that my kids present...It's always sort of short staffed for special education.

Teachers clearly focused on their need to better understand their students as they embark on changes within their schools; concerns over the implementation of new instructional strategies ran a distant second. The implications for change, given this content focus and the limitations of the staff development process, noted in the previous section, are discussed below.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The teachers, principals, and staff development specialists who participated in the seven FY 93 focus groups provided insights into the staff development needs of schools as they go about implementing different school restructuring efforts. Participants were clearly frustrated with what they perceived as the mismatch between what they considered to be the ideal approach to staff development versus the reality of what they were able to fashion, given the restrictions imposed upon them through state or district policies, or self-imposed through their own decisions regarding the allocation of resources, particularly time. Whether discussing the lessons to be learned from visiting other schools implementing similar programs, breaking down faculty resistance, bonding with team members, or simply scheduling programs for maximum attendance, the process of staff development was invariably the victim of the limitations of time.

Time and money clearly go hand in hand. Time can be built into the school day if money is available to pay for substitutes. Without such funds, schools are forced to rely on snatches of time -- frequently scheduled during teachers own time. While many enthusiastic and committed teachers are willing to donate their time to the "worthy cause" of restructuring, there is a limit to the amount of time that can be expected of teachers before burn-out and resentment set in. "Change is resource-hungry" and "success is likely only when the extra energy requirements of change are met through the provision of released time..." (Fullan & Miles, 1992, p.750). Non-program teachers will be less likely to comply with such expectations, thus compromising the restructuring effort that ultimately requires buy-in and support from all members of the staff.

The provision of planning time -- an integral factor in staff development for teachers challenged by new "rules, roles, relationships, and results" -- is an issue that ultimately has to be addressed at the policy level, thus underscoring the need for systemic change. Principals and teachers appear unwilling or unable to reorganize their school schedules and/or staffing responsibilities in order to implement the changes that are needed if their restructuring efforts are to move forward. Until and unless they can be

convinced to do so, changes at the state or district level appear necessary in order to provide teachers with the time and/or resources for joint activities.

Similarly, the often superficial way that staff development is handled and its lack of relevance to the individual needs of schools is an example of where change has to occur at the state or district level. State or local school district policies often dictate both the timing and the content of "official" staff development days, and the reality of this "when and what" rarely coincides with or meets the more specialized needs of restructuring team members. Bureaucratic decisions and policies of this type interfere with the on-going professional development of teachers that is vital for the implementation of new programs; they also send the message that support is not forthcoming, sometimes forcing schools to find "unofficial" solutions to meeting their needs.

The only content issues to receive more than a passing mention were those that dealt with the demographics of the student population. While there is an increasing awareness within many school districts that curricula must reflect the multicultural origins of the students they serve, movement in that direction has been slow. And teachers are saying that such curricula are a necessary but insufficient step to reaching their students: teachers also need to understand the culture and community from whence their students come. Staff development is seen as an important vehicle towards progress in this area. Staff development may not be sufficient, however, where students carry with them to school the baggage of abuse and neglect. Teachers feel ill-equipped to cope with such situations and would like to see professionals in the school who have the experience and expertise to help.

Finally, the limited discussion of staff development needs related to instructional strategies was disturbing. The literature on restructuring is clear about the need to rethink curricula and instructional practices in order to ensure success for all students. As noted above, however, FY 93 focus group participants had a different agenda. Until staff development programs focus on changing the "rules, roles, and relationships" related to instruction, the likelihood that restructuring efforts will enhance the "results" achieved by all students is limited.

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